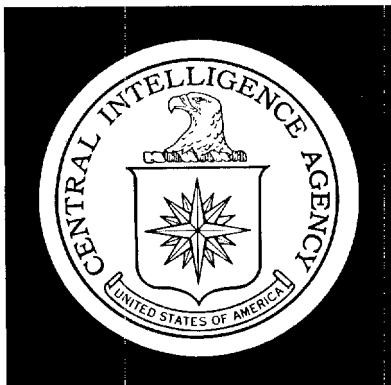


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West Germany: West and East German negotiators have reached agreement on a site for a meeting between Chancellor Brandt and Premier Stoph, surmounting a major hurdle for Brandt's efforts to improve Bonn's relations with the East.

The meeting will be held at Erfurt, in the southwest corner of East Germany, on 19 March. This circumvents the question of whether Brandt should stop in West Berlin on his way to or from the meeting, which was originally set for East Berlin. Egon Bahr, Brandt's negotiator in Moscow, had tried to induce the Soviets to use their influence, and indeed Moscow may have influenced the East German decision.

Following his meetings with Foreign Minister Gromyko on 6 and 10 March, Bahr has concluded that Gromyko now accepts his argument that the Federal Republic cannot discuss Berlin problems directly with the Soviet Union, but must leave them to the four powers.

The Soviets, however, have also raised a new issue by seeking a specific prohibition on interference in the internal affairs of other countries. This may reflect Moscow's exaggerated fears of potential German competition for influence in Eastern Europe.

* * * *

In Warsaw, the latest Polish - West German talks on 9 and 10 March have produced no apparent progress. The Poles insist on recognition of the Oder-Neisse line, and they said at the talks that the present West German position is a step backward from the stance taken earlier by Brandt's party. The next Polish - West German session is expected to take place in the second half of April.

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UN - Middle East: Lebanon and Israel are not likely to agree to Secretary General Thant's suggestion last week that UN observers be stationed along their border. Lebanon would consider the posting of observers only if some of them were stationed on the Israeli side of the border and if Tel Aviv recognized the border as a line established by the 1949 armistice rather than as merely a cease-fire frontier. Tel Aviv has already indicated that it cannot accept either condition.

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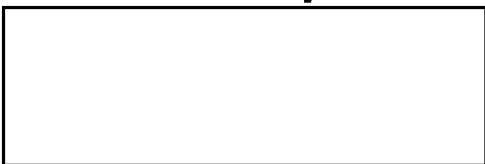
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